





THE
5528
L I F E,
STRANGE VOYAGES,
AND UNCOMMON ADVENTURES
OF

Ambrose Gwinett,

Formerly known to the Public as the LAME BEGGAR, who
for a long Time swept the Way at the
Mews Gate, Charing Cross,

CONTAINING

An Account of his being convicted and hanged in Chains,
at Deal, in Kent, for the supposed Murder of Mr. COL-
LINS, and his surprising Recovery after being executed.

His Voyage to the *West Indies*—his being taken by the Spa-
niards, where he meets the identical COLLINS whom he
was supposed to have murdered—the Accident that threw
Mr. GWINETT into the Hands of Pirates—his extraor-
dinary Adventures with them, and being re-taken by the
Spaniards, and by them condemned to the Gallies—his
being taken and made a Slave of by the Algerines, and,
after suffering many Hardships, his Return to *England*.

L O N D O N:

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[PRICE FOUR PENCE.]

~~George Roberts~~, an attorney in our town, with whom I staid four years and a quarter, to his great content and my own satisfaction.

My sister, being come to woman's estate, had now been married something more than a twelve-month to one Sawyer, a sea-faring man, who, having got considerable prizes, my father also giving him 200l. with my sister, quitted his profession, and set up a public-house within three miles of the place of his nativity, which was Deal, in the county of Kent.

I had frequent invitations to pass a short time with them; and in the autumn of the year 1709, having obtained my master's consent for that purpose, I left the city of Canterbury, on foot, on Wednesday morning, being the 17th of September; but through some unavoidable delays on the road, the evening was considerably advanced before I reached Deal; and so tired was I, being unused to that way of travelling, that, had my life depended on it, I could not have reached as far as my sister's that night, she living, as I have already said, three miles beyond that place. At this time there were many of her majesty Queen Anne's ships lying in the harbour, the English being then at war with the French and Spaniards; besides which, I found this was the day for holding the yearly fair; so that the town was so full that a bed was not to be gotten for love or money. I went seeking

seeking a lodging from house to house to no purpose, all, being quite spent, I returned to the public-house where I had first made enquiry, desiring leave to sit by their kitchen fire to rest myself till morning.

The publican and his wife where I put up happened, unfortunately for me, to be acquainted with my brother and sister; and, finding by my discourse that I was a relation of theirs, and going to visit them, the landlady presently said she would endeavour to get me a bed; and going into the kitchen, she quickly after called me into a parlour that led from it. Here I saw, sitting by the fire-side, a middle-aged man in a night-gown and cap, who was reckoning money at a table. "Uncle," said the woman, as soon as I entered, "this is a brother of our friend Mrs. Sawyer; he cannot get a bed any where, and is tired after his journey. You are the only person that lies in this house alone, will you give him part of yours?" To this the man answered, that he knew he had been out of order, that he was blooded that day, and, consequently, a bed-fellow could not be agreeable. "However," added he, "rather than the young man should sit up, he is welcome to sleep with me." After this we sat a while together, when, having put his money in a canvas bag, into the pocket of his night-gown, he took the candle, and I followed him up to bed.

How

How long I slept I cannot exactly determine, but I conjectured it was about three o'clock in the morning, when I awoke with a cholic, attended with the most violent gripes; I attributed this to some bacon and cabbage I had eaten the preceding day for dinner, after which I drank a large draught of milk. I found my chum awake as well as myself; he asked me what was the matter; I informed him, and at the same time begged he would direct me to the necessary. He told me, when I was down stairs, I must turn on my right hand, and go straight into the garden, at the end of which it was, just over the sea; "But," adds he, "you may possibly find some difficulty in opening the door, the string being broke which pulls up the latch; I will give you a penknife, which you may open it with through a chink in the boards." So saying, he put his hand into his waistcoat pocket, which lay over him on the bed, and gave me a middling-sized pen-knife.

I hurried on a few of my cloaths, and went down stairs; but I must observe to you, that, unclasping the penknife to open the door of the necessary, according to his directions, a piece of money, which stuck between the blade and the grove in the handle, fell into my hand; I did not examine what it was, nor indeed could I well see, there being then but very faint moonlight, so I put them together carelessly into my pocket.

I apprehend I staid in the garden pretty near half an hour, for I was extremely ill, and, by over-heating myself with walking the preceding day, had brought on the piles, a disorder I was subject to from my youth. These seem trifling circumstances, but they afterwards turned out of infinite consequence to me. When I returned to the chamber I was surpris'd to find my bed-fellow gone; I called several times, but, receiving no answer, took it for granted he had withdrawn into some adjoining closet for his private occasions; I therefore went to bed, and again fell asleep.

About six o'clock I arose, nobody yet being up in the house. The gentleman was not yet returned to bed, or if he was, had again left it. I dressed myself with what haste I could, being impatient to see my sister; and the reckoning being paid over-night, I let myself out at the street-door.

I will not trouble you with a relation of the kindness with which my sister and her husband received me. We breakfasted together, and I believe it might be about eleven o'clock in the forenoon, when, standing at the door, my brother-in-law being by my side, we saw three horsemen galloping towards us. As soon as they came up they stopped, and one of them, alighting suddenly, seized me by the collar, crying, "You are the king's prisoner." I desired to know my crime. He said I should know

know that as soon as I got to Deal, where I must immediately go with them. One of them told my brother that the night before I had committed a murder and robbery.

Resistance would have proved as vain as my tears and protestations of my innocence. In a word, a warrant was produced, and I was carried back to Deal, attended by three men; my brother with another friend accompanying us, who knew not what to say, or how to comfort me.

Being arrived in the town I was immediately hurried to the house where I had slept the preceding night, the master of which was one of the three men that came to apprehend me, tho' in my first hurry I did not recollect him. We were met at the door by a croud of people, crying, "Which is he? Which is he?" As soon as I entered I was accosted by the publican's wife, in tears, "O cursed wretch, what hast thou done? Thou hast murdered and robbed my poor dear uncle, and all through me who put thee to lie with him! But where hast thou hid his money? and what hast thou done with his body? Thou shalt be hanged upon a gallows as high as the may-pole." My brother begged her to be pacified, and I was taken into a private room. They then began to question me, as the woman had done, about where I had put the money, and how I had disposed of the body. I asked them what mo-
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ney, and how I had disposed of the body. I asked them what money, and what body they meant—Then they said I had killed the person I had lain with the preceding night, for the sake of a large sum I had seen him with. I fell down upon my knees, calling God to witness I knew nothing of what they accused me. Then somebody cried, "Carry him up stairs," and I was brought into the chamber where I had slept. Here the man of the house went to the bed, and turning down the cloaths, shewed the sheets, pillows, and bolster dyed in blood. He asked me if I knew any thing of that; I declared to God I did not. Says a person that was in the room, "Young man, something very odd must have past here last night; for, lying in the next chamber, I heard groanings and going up and down stairs more than once or twice." I told them the circumstance of my illness, and that I had been up and down myself, with all that passed between my bed-fellow and me. Somebody proposed to search me; several began to turn my pockets inside out, and from my waistcoat tumbled the penknife and the piece of money I have already mentioned. Upon seeing these the woman immediately screamed out, "O God! there is my uncle's penknife." Then taking up the money and calling the people about her, "Here," said she, "is what puts the villain's guilt beyond a doubt; I can swear to this William and Mary's guinea; my uncle has long had it by way of pocket-piece, and had engraved the first letters

of his name upon it." She then began to cry afresh, while I could do nothing but call heaven to witness that I was as innocent as the child unborn.

After this they carried me down to the necessary, and here fresh proofs appeared against me. The constable, who had never left me, perceived blood upon the edges of the seat, (which might probably proceed from my being troubled with the hemorrhage the night before) "Here," said he, "after having cut the throat, he has let the body down into the sea." This every body immediately assented to. "Then," said the master of the house, "it is in vain to look for the body any further, for there was a spring tide last night, which carried it off."

The consequence of these proceedings was an immediate examination before a justice of the peace; after which I suffered a long and rigorous imprisonment in the county goal of Maidstone. For some time my father, master, and relations were inclined to think me innocent, and, in compliance with my earnest request, an advertisement was inserted in the London Gazette, representing my deplorable circumstances, and offering a reward to any person who could give tidings of Mr. Richard Collins (the name of the man I was supposed to have murdered) either alive or dead. No information, however, of any kind came to hand;

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at the assizes, therefore, I was brought to trial, and, circumstances appearing strongly against me, I received sentence to be carried in a cart, the Wednesday fortnight following, to the town of Deal, and there to be hanged before the inn-keeper's door where I had committed the supposed murder; after which I was to be hung in chains within a little way of my brother's house.

Nothing could have supported me under this dreadful condemnation but a consciousness of my not being guilty of the crime for which I was to suffer. My friends now began to consider my declarations of innocence as persisting in falsehood, to the perdition of my soul; many of them discontinued their enquiries after me, and those few who still came to visit me, only came to urge me to confession; but I was resolved I would never die with a lie of that kind in my mouth.

The Monday was now arrived before the fatal day, when an end was to be put to my miseries. I was called down into the court of the prison, but I own I was not a little shocked when I found it was to be taken measure of for the irons in which I was to be hung after execution. A fellow-prisoner appeared before me in the same woeful plight, (he had robbed the mail) and the smith was measuring him when I came down; while the goaler, with as much calmness as if he had been ordering a pair of

frays for his daughter, was giving directions as what manner the irons should be made, so as to support the man, who was remarkable heavy and corpulent.

Between this and the day of my execution I spent my time alone in prayer and meditation. At length Wednesday morning came, and about six o'clock I was put into the cart; but ~~there~~ such a day of wind, rain, and thunder never blew out of the heavens, it pursued us all the way; and when we arrived at Deal it became so violent, that the sheriff and his officers, who had not a dry stitch on them, could scarce sit their horses: for my own part, my mind (God help me) was with long agitation become so unfeeling, that I was in a manner insensible to every object about me; however, I heard the sheriff whisper the executioner to make what dispatch he could, without the least emotion, and suffered him to tuck me up like a log of wood, unconscious of what he was doing.

I can give no account of what I felt while I was hanging; only that I remember, after being turned off, something for a little time appeared about me like a blaze of fire; nor do I know how long I hung; no doubt the violence of the weather favored me greatly in that circumstance.

What I am now going to relate I learned from my brother, which is, that, after having
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hanging about half an hour, the sheriff's officers all went off, and I was put down by the executioner; but when he came to put the irons upon me, it was found a mistake had been made, and that the irons of the other man, which were much too large for me, had been sent instead of mine. This they remedied as well as they could by stuffing rags between my body and the hoops that surrounded it; after which I was taken, according to my sentence, to the place appointed, and hung upon a gibbet which was ready prepared.

The cloth over my face being but slightly tied, and suffering no pressure from the irons, which stood a great way from it, was, I suppose, soon detached by the wind, which was still rather violent, and probably its blowing on my bare face expedited my recovery. I remain it is that in this tremendous situation, I came to myself.

It was, no doubt, a very great blessing that I did not immediately return to perfectly to my senses as to have a feeling of things about me; yet I had a sort of recollection of what had happened, and, in some measure, was sensible where I was.

The gibbet was placed at one corner of a small common field, where my sister's cows usually ran; and it pleased God that about this time a lady, who took care of them, came to drive

drive them home for evening milking. The creatures, which were feeding almost underneath, brought him near the gibbet, when, stopping to look at the melancholy spectacle, he perceived that the cloth was from off my face, and in the very moment that he looked up, saw me open my eyes, and move my under jaw. He immediately ran home to inform the people at his master's. At first they made some difficulty to believe his story; however, my brother at length came out, and, by the time he got to the field, I was so much alive, that my groans were very audible.

It was now dusk. The first thing they ran for was a ladder. One of my brother's men mounted, and, putting his hand to my stomach, felt my heart beating very strongly. But it was found impossible to detach me from the gibbet without cutting it down. A saw, therefore, was got for that purpose; and, without giving you a detail of trifling circumstances, in less than half an hour, having freed me from my irons, they got me bloodied, and put me into a warm bed in my brother's house.

It is an amazing thing that, though upwards of eight persons were intrusted with this transaction, and I remained three days in the place after it happened, not a creature betrayed the secret. Early next morning it was known that the gibbet was cut down, and it immediately occurred to every body, that it was done by my relations

relations, in order to put a slight veil over their own shame, by burying the body; but when my brother was summoned to the mayor's house, in order to be questioned, and he denied knowing any thing of the matter, little more stir was made about it; partly because he was greatly respected by the neighbouring gentlemen; and, in some measure, because it was known that I continued to persist in my being innocent of the fact for which I suffered.

Thus was I most miraculously delivered from an ignominious death; (if I may call my coming to life a delivery, after all I had endured) but how was I to dispose of my life now I had regained it? To stay in England was impossible, without exposing myself again to the terrors of the law. In this dilemma a fortunate circumstance occurred. There had lain, for some time, at my brother's house, one or two of the principal officers of a privateer that was preparing for a cruise, and just then ready to sail. The captain kindly offered to take me aboard with him. You may imagine little difficulty was made on our side to accept of such a proposal; and, proper necessities being quickly provided for me, my sister recommended me to the protection of God and my worthy commander, who most humanely received me as a sort of under-assistant to his steward.

We had been six months out upon a cruise, having had but very indifferent success, when, being upon the coast of Florida, then in the hands

hands of the Spaniards, we unfortunately fell in with a squadron of their men of war; and, being consequently taken without striking a stroke, we were all brought prisoners into the harbor of Havannah. I was really now almost weary of my life, and should have been very glad to have ended it in the loathsome dungeon where (with forty others of my unfortunate countrymen) the enemy had stowed me; but, after three years close confinement, we were let out, in order to be put on board transports, to be conveyed to Pennsylvania, and from thence to England. This, as you may believe, was a disagreeable sentence to me, taking it for granted that a return home would be a return to the gallows: being now, therefore, a tolerable master of the Spanish language, I solicited very strongly to be left behind; which favor I obtained, by means of the master of the prison, with whom, during my confinement, I had contracted a sort of intimacy; and he not only took me into his house, as soon as my countrymen were gone, but, in a short time, procured me a salary from the governor for being his deputy.

Indeed, at this particular time, the office was by no means agreeable. The coast had been long infested with pirates, the most desperate gang of villains that can be imagined; and there was hardly a month passed, that one or other of their vessels did not fall into the hands of the governor, and the crew as constantly put under

under my care. Once I very narrowly escaped being knocked on the head by one of these ruffians, and having the keys wrested from me: another time I was shot at. 'Tis true, in both cases the persons suffered for their attempt, and in the last I thought a little too cruelly; for the fellow who let off the carbine, was not only put to the torture, to confess his accomplices, but afterwards broke upon the wheel, where he was left to expire the most shocking spectacle I ever beheld with my eyes.

I had been in my office about three months when a ship arrived from Port Royal, another Spanish settlement on the coast, with nine English prisoners on board. I was standing in the street as they were coming up from the port with a guard of soldiers, to the governor's house. I thought something struck me in the face of one of the prisoners that I had before been acquainted with him. I could not stop them for us to speak together; however, in about an hour after, they were all brought down to prison, there to be lodged till the governor signified his further pleasure.

As soon as the poor creatures found I was an Englishman they were extremely happy, even in their distressed situation, though they were treated with lenity enough, and only sent to the prison until a lodging could be provided for them, they having been, in the course of the

the war, made prisoners, as well as myself, and then on their return home. I now had an opportunity of taking notice of the man whose face I thought I knew, and I was more and more confirmed that I was not mistaken. In a word, I verily thought this was the person for whose supposed murder I had suffered so much in England; and the thought was so strong in my head, that I could not sleep a wink all the night.

In the morning after their arrival, I told them that if any of them had a mind to walk about the town I would procure them permission, and go along with them. This man said he would go, and it was what I wished. Three other prisoners, that went out along with us, walked a little in advance. I now took the opportunity, and, looking in his face, "Sir," said I, "was you ever at Deal?" I believe he at that instant had some recollection of me; for, putting his hand upon my shoulder, tears burst into his eyes. "Sir," said I, "if you are the man I take you for, you here see before you one of the most unfortunate of human kind—Sir, is your name Collins?" He answered it was. "Richard Collins?" said I.—He replied "Yes."—"Then," said I, "I was hanged and gibbeted upon your account in England."

After our mutual surprise was over he made me give him a circumstantial detail of every thing

thing that had happened to me in England, from the moment we parted. I never saw any man express such concern as he did while I was pursuing my melancholy adventures; but when I came to the circumstances of my being hanged, and afterwards hung in chains, I could hardly prevail upon him to believe my relation, till backed by the most serious asseverations, pronounced in the most serious manner. When I had done, "Well," said he, "young man, (for I was then but in my five and twentieth year. Mr. Collins might be about forty-three) if you have suffered misfortunes on my account, do not imagine (though I cannot lay them at your door) that I have been without my sufferings. God knows my heart, I am exceedingly sorry for the injustice that has been done you; but the ways of Providence are unsearchable." He then proceeded to inform me by what accident all my troubles had been brought about.

—"When you left me in bed," said he—"having at first awakened with an oppression I could not account for, I found myself grow exceedingly sick and weak; I did not know what was the matter; I groaned and sighed, and thought myself going to die; when, accidentally putting my hand to my left arm, in which I had been blooded the morning before, I found my shirt wet, and that, in short, the bandage having slipped, the orifice was again opened, and a great flux ensued. This immediately ac-

counted for the condition I found myself in. I thought, however, I would not disturb the family, which I knew had gone to bed very late. I therefore mustered all my strength, and got up, with my night-gown loose about me, to go to a neighbouring barber, who had bled me, in order to have the blood stopped, and the bandage placed. He lived directly opposite to our house; but when I was crossing the way in order to knock at his door, a band of men, armed with cutlasses and hangers, came down the town, and, seizing me, hurried me towards the beach. I begged and prayed, but they soon silenced my cries. At first I took them for a press-gang, though I afterwards found they were a gang of ruffians belonging to a privateer, aboard of which they immediately brought me. However, before I got thither, the loss of blood occasioned me to faint away. The surgeon of the ship, I suppose, tied up my arm; for when my senses returned I found myself in a hammock, with somebody feeling my pulse. The vessel was then under way. I asked where I was; they said I was safe enough. I immediately called for my night-gown; it was brought me; but of a considerable sum of money that was in the pocket I could get no account. I complained to the captain of the violence that had been done me, and the robbery his men had committed; but, being a brutish fellow, he laughed at my grief, and told me if I had lost any thing I should soon have prize-money enough to make me amends. In a word, not being

being able to help myself, I was obliged to submit; and for three months they forced me to work before the mast. In the end, however, we met with the same fate as you did—we were taken by the Spaniards; and, by adventures paralleled to your own; you now see me here on my return to my native country, whither, if you will accompany me, I shall think myself extremely happy."

There was nothing now to prevent my going to England; and a ship being to sail for Europe in eight or ten days, in it Mr. Collins and I determined to embark. As soon as we returned home I went to my master, and told him my resolution; he did not dissuade me from it, chiefly, I suppose, because it gave him an opportunity of getting the little office I held for a nephew of his, who was lately come to live with him, to whom, the very same day, I delivered up my trust.

And here the providence of God was no less remarkable to me than in other particulars of my life; for, that very same night, eight or ten pirates, who were in the prison, watched the occasion, while the young man was locking up the wards, to seize him, taking the keys from him, after having left him for dead; and, before the alarm was sufficiently given, five of them made their escape, having, as it was supposed, got off the coast by means of piratical boats, which kept continually hovering about.

It

It was the sixth of November, 1712, that, after having made my little preparations, I sent my trunk aboard the *Nostra Senora*, a merchant ship, bound for Cadiz; Michael Deronza, master. The vessel was to sail that evening, and lay in the roady about three miles from the town. About seven o'clock in the evening, I being then sitting with Signior Gasper, my old friend and master, in the portico of his house, a lad came up, and said the boat had been waiting half an hour for me at the port, and that my companion was already on board. I ran into the house for a small bundle, and only staying to take leave of one or two of the family, made what haste I could to the quay; but when I arrived I found the boat had already put off, leaving word, that I should overtake them at a little bay about a mile beyond the town. The dusk was coming on. I ran along the shore, and, as I imagined, soon had a sight of the boat, to which I hallooed as loud as I was able; they answered, and immediately put about to take me in; but we had scarce got fifty yards from land, when, on looking about for my friend Mr. Collins, I missed him, and then it was I found I had made a mistake, and, instead of getting aboard my own boat, which I now saw a considerable way a-head, I had got into a boat belonging to some of the pirates. I attempted to leap over-board, and should easily have swam ashore, but I was prevented by one of the crew, who gave me a stroke on the head, which immediately laid me senseless; and I found

I found afterwards they mistook me for one of their own men, whom they had sent to purchase something in the town.

A more infernal crew than these pirates breathed not upon the face of the earth. Their whole lives were a scene of rapine and murder, which, when they had, not an opportunity of committing upon wretches that fell into their clutches during their piratical pursuits, they committed upon one another. During the time that I remained with them, which was upwards of three years and three quarters, there were no less than eleven assassinations among themselves.

There was an uninhabited island, about twelve leagues west of the Gulf of Mexico, which those villains call Swallow Island, from the great number of those birds which harbored upon it. Here they had a fortification, and the place being rendered almost inaccessible by rocks, except at one little inlet, just large enough to admit a single vessel, they defied the Spanish power.

Their captain was one Bryan Walsh, an Irishman, whom I cannot help calling a most bloody and execrable villain, though God Almighty put it in his heart to be a very good friend to me.

When

When I was brought into the ship, and immediately after into the captain's cabin, the first person that accosted me was one of the fellows that had broke out of prison, and had formerly been under my care. He knew me directly, and, without any more ado, drawing out his hanger, aimed a stroke at me, which, falling upon my neck, entered deep into the flesh, and must infallibly have put an end to my life had not the captain prevented it by raising his cane between him and me, which broke the force of the blow. From this moment he seemed to take me under his protection. At his own request I gave him a history of my life, which astonished him greatly; but notwithstanding I pleaded hard to be set on shore again, he absolutely refused, and, in spite of all my intreaties to the contrary, brought me to the island and fortification already mentioned, where, finding I could read and write, (two qualifications he wanted himself) he thought I might be of use to him.

I have already said that with these people I remained upwards of three years: on land I acted as a store-keeper, and at sea as a sort of steward to the ship. It is to be observed that there was always a sufficient number of hands left on the island to man the fort, which was so situated as effectually to prevent the approach of an enemy. Indeed the office of store-keeper was a place of great trust. You would hardly credit was I to attempt to tell you the immense

men's riches, those robbers had amassed together. One article alone will be sufficient to give you an idea of it. Under one shed I myself reckoned three thousand eight hundred bales of English goods; and I may safely declare that in other merchandize, of almost every kind, they fell nothing behind; and, upon an average, there could not be less in their coffers than two hundred thousand pound sterling in specie, beside a great quantity of gold bars.

The continual terror that was on my mind while I remained with these people is not to be imagined; but to give you a detail of my manner of life, while I endured this worst of bondage, would be tedious, because it had no variety, and shocking to boot, as I was forced to enter into all their horrid schemes. I shall only tell you that, in one of our cruizes, having met with a Jamaica ship, we hoisted out our black colors, and, having boarded her, because she made some resistance and killed one of our men, the captain ordered that the whole crew should be massacred, which wicked command was executed upon the master, five seamen, and a boy, in a horrid manner, before the monster's eyes; then, taking the cargo out, which proved to be rum and sugar, we scuttled the ship, and returned to our fortification.

But to see how the avenger of wicked deeds makes the fruits of our crimes our punishment! This cargo of rum, which was of a kind not

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many degrees short of aquafortis, was drank with such eagerness by the men, that, in little more than three days, not a drop of it was left; and, out of our company of eighteen men, seven absolutely lost their lives by it, among which was the captain.

I cannot but confess I had some attachment to this man, because he always appeared particularly attached to me; when, therefore, I saw him lie senseless on the floor, overgorged with this infernal liquor, I did every thing I could to recover him, and so far succeeded as to bring him to his senses; but the quantity he had drank had inflamed his bowels to a degree to be assuaged by no lenitives that were in my power to procure him. He was seized with intermitting convulsions, which the next day carried him off; but, about four hours before he died, he called to me, in presence of all the men who stood about him in the cabin, and, desiring me to sit down, with pen and ink, to draw his will, he left me sole heir to his share of the booty, signing the paper with his mark; which paper, through a series of unheard-of misfortunes, I have preserved in my custody ever since.

We buried the captain the next day; and, on inspection and division of the treasure, I found myself worth considerably more than forty thousand pounds sterling. The persons now remaining of our company were Joseph Wright,

Andrew Van Hooten, a Dutchman, James Winter, and myself, the four principals, besides four common men, to whom we assigned four thousand pounds each; nor did I observe any discontent among them on account of the bequest the captain had made to me.

All my thoughts were immediately bent on getting off the island to some of the English settlements. I plainly perceived that my companions wanted to be again at their old practices; but one day, talking upon the subject of another cruise, I represented to them the dangerous and uncomfortable situation we were all in, that we had each a very ample fortune to support us in any part of the world, it was therefore my advice, that we should immediately put our treasure on board, with as much of the merchandize as we could conveniently carry off, and make the best of our way to Jamaica, where there was no doubt but we should be well received.

They agreed to the proposals with more alacrity than I thought they would. We fell immediately to work, and in two days were prepared to sail. But though we put a considerable quantity of bale goods on board, the quantity of them still in the warehouses was astonishing. I warned the fellows of their rapacity, and the danger of too deeply loading the ship, but they would not give over till she could hold no more; and then the treasure, packed

in chests, each man's share separate to himself, we put in the cabin.

We weighed anchor the 3d of August, and for three days we had excellent weather, but the fourth, a storm began to threaten, and the symptoms still increasing, by midnight such a war was waged between the seas and the heavens as to that hour I never was witness to.

About three o'clock in the morning we were obliged to heave the ship to under her bare poles; and the sea ran so exceeding high, that we could not venture to keep any lights on board, though the night was so dark that we could scarce see one another a quarter of a yard distance: the wind still increasing, we sprung the main-mast about six feet from the deck.

We now began to feel the consequence of too deeply lading the vessel. The first things we threw overboard were our guns; and, as our case became more and more desperate, every thing followed them, not excepting our chests of treasure. Thus I was once more reduced to my original state of poverty. As daylight appeared the storm abated. We then, as well as we were able, erected jury masts, and, in about four hours, managed, with the greatest difficulty, to get the vessel again under sail.

I was now standing behind the main at the wheel, leaning against the mizen-mast, returning

ing God thanks in my own mind for our amazing escape, when the boatswain came up to me and said, "Damme, Master Gwinett, you have brought us all into a pretty hole here; if it had not been for you we should not have taken this trip, and lost the substance we have been working for so many years; but you lop too, I assure you." I asked him what he meant; he said he would let me see; upon which he, and two or three others of them that came behind him, seizing me by the nape of the neck and the waistband of the breeches, forced me over the rails of the quarter deck, and dropped me into the sea.

The shock of the fall, and the maze I was in from so unexpected an accident, almost bereaved me of my senses; I endeavored, however, to keep myself above water as well as I could, though I had no manner of hopes of saving my life. My first attempt was to swim after the ship; but, finding that impracticable, I turned about, and I believe might have swam about three quarters of an hour, when, being very faint and weak, I began to put up my last prayer to God, and determined to commit myself to the bottom of the deep, but at that instant, turning my head a little aside, I saw something at a small distance from me which at first I took for a barrel, but, good heaven! what was my astonishment when, coming near it, I perceived it to be one of our own boats which had been washed over board the night before; and,

and, to complete my joy, the oars were lashed to the seat. Almost spent as I was I made shift to get into it; and here I saw myself freed in a miraculous manner from the fury of the waves, but at the same time I found myself in an open boat, at least sixty leagues from any land, without a compass, or any kind of nourishment whatsoever, unless I might count such some tobacco I had in a box in one of my waistcoat pockets, and I believe in my conscience, it afforded a nourishment that, in a great measure, helped to preserve me.

It was a very great blessing for me that moderate weather followed the tempest, by which means I was enabled to keep the boat tolerable steady.

I could not have been less than thirty hours in this situation, when I was taken up by a Spanish carrack; but I can hardly reckon that among fortunate accidents, for the same day that I entered the ship, one of the men, while I was asleep, hanging up my cloaths among the shrouds to dry, in doing it emptied my pockets, and, finding several papers relative to the pirates' affairs, as soon as they arrived in Port Royal, whither they were bound, they seized me as one of their desperate gang.

I must observe to you, that when I first was taken into the ship, I did not think it safe to inform them of my being among the pirates, but

but made up a very plausible story, which satisfied them very well; which precaution was my ruin; for now confessing the truth, and telling them I had been forced into the pirates' service, with all that had happened to me among them, my prevarication made them suspect my veracity, and I was kept two years in prison, when, by what means I know not, some of the wretches with whom I left our island, having been taken as pirates upon the Spanish coasts in Europe, an order came to bring me over to Cadiz, in Old Spain, in order to be an evidence. When I came there, I was again confined for many months; but, at length, when the pirates were brought to their trial, instead of being made use of as an evidence, I found myself treated as a delinquent, and, with two or three others, condemned to the galleys for life.

I worked on board them for some years, when the galley I belonged to was ordered to sea against an Algerine rover that infested the coast, but instead of one we met with three of them. the issue of the engagement was fatal to us—The greatest part of the crew were killed, and the rest taken prisoners, among which last I was one, having lost the leg in the action which you see me want.

After this I passed a long and painful slavery in Algiers, till, with many other English captives, I was released, by agreement between the Dey of Algiers and his Britannic Majesty's agent.

agent. In the year 1770 I returned to England. The first thing I did was to enquire after my relations; but all those nearest to me were dead; and I found Mr. Collins had never returned home, so I supposed he died in his passage.

Though I was not an old man, I was so enfeebled by hardships that I was unable to work; and, being without any manner of support, I could think of no way of getting my living but by begging.

AP 30

When I came there, I was again confined for many months; and at length, when the pirates were brought to their trial, instead of being made use of as an evidence, I found myself treated as a prisoner, and with two or three others, sent to the gaol for life.

I looked upon them for some years, when the galley I belonged to was ordered to sail against the coast, and instead of the coast, the island of one we met with some of them. The first of the engagement was fatal to me; the second part of the day was killed, and the third day, when I was with him, I was one, having lost the leg which was the first of the day.

FINIS.

After this I passed a long and painful slavery in Algiers, till, with many other faithful slaves, I was released by agreement between the King of Algiers and the British Ministry, as agent.